

F-2006 00785

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March 10, 2006

Central Intelligence Agency
Scott A. Koch
Information and Privacy Coordinator
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Koch:

Pursuant to the provisions of the Freedom of Information act, I respectfully request a copy of the intelligence assessment written by Paul Pillar two months before the U.S. invaded Iraq (see enclosed description). This assessment was previously requested by Mr. David Martin of CBS News.

I agree to pay up to \$25 for costs associated with this noncommercial request.

Sincerely,

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David Martin Dispatch: Doing The Old Potomac Two-Step



Pentagon correspondent David Martin shares one of the better tales of a bureaucratic run-around you might ever hear from a network correspondent.

For the past several months, I've been trying to get my hands on a copy of an intelligence assessment written two months before the U.S. invaded Iraq which warned that unless American

troops moved quickly to restore essential services and provide security they would be viewed as occupiers, not liberators. In other words, it predicted exactly what happened, but it was ignored by senior officials in the Bush administration who insisted right up to the day of the invasion that American troops would be greeted as liberators.

Normally, an intelligence assessment like that is a highly classified document, but in this case I had been told that an unclassified version had been prepared by the CIA in the summer of 2003 in anticipation of releasing it publicly. So I called the CIA public affairs office and asked for a copy. The answer was that the assessment had been prepared by an organization called the National Intelligence Council, not the CIA. It now reports to the newly-created Director of National Intelligence. So I called DNI public affairs. They told me I would have to file a Freedom of Information Act request. I filed an FOIA. Last month, I received my response. It said that since the assessment was written in January of 2003 when the National Intelligence Council was still under the CIA, my request was being forwarded to the CIA. I was back where I started from. This week I received a letter from the CIA saying that my request was being processed. I don't know if there's no telling when they'll get to mine. I'd call that a bureaucratic run around.

At exactly the same time I was playing hide-the-memo with the Director of National Intelligence, the author of the assessment, a now retired CIA officer named Paul Pillar, was writing an article for Foreign Affairs magazine in which he described how the Bush administration had simply disregarded any pre-war intelligence which didn't fit their game plan. Before that article could be published, it had to be reviewed by the CIA to make sure it didn't contain any classified information. Why did I get the run around while Pillar was given permission to publish? Only the bureaucracy knows. Someday I'll get a response to my FOIA request. The document will no longer be newsworthy by then, but that's O.K. When Pillar's article is published, I will have a copy of the assessment.

Posted by [Vaughn Ververs](#) at 2:30 PM : March 10, 2006

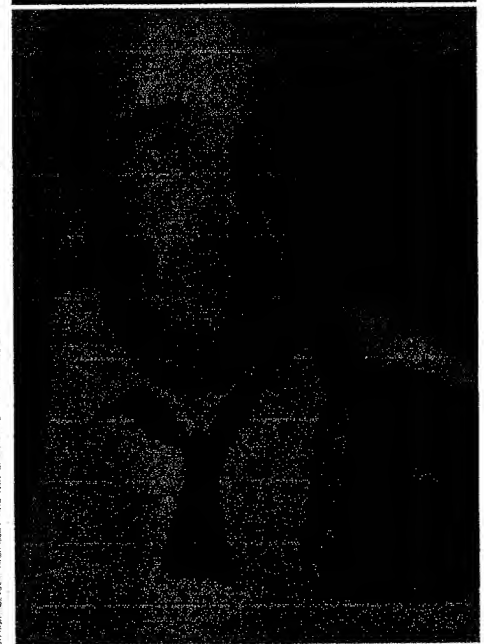
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